THE NEW
INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • MONDAY • JANUARY 31, 2022 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 18 • LATE CITY EDITION

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/thenewindianexpress twitter.com/newindianexpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress

U.S. H-1B VISA REGISTRATION WINDOW OPENS ON MARCH 1

Successful applicants for the much-sought-after visa for FY23 will be randomly selected and notified online by March 31

LIFELINE FOR U.S. COMPANIES AND EMPLOYEES

US companies depend on H-1Bs to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China. In addition to the maximum 65,000 that can be issued visas, 20,000 other H-1Bs can be given to foreign students who have completed higher studies from a US university in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects

THE DEADLINE & REGISTRATION ACCOUNT

- Prospective petitioners can complete their registrations till the noon of March 18, Eastern time, which is 10.30 pm in India Standard Time (IST)
- The petitioners can use the myUSCIS online system, which will assign a confirmation number to each registration | P11

$10
THE FEE PER APPLICANT FOR EACH REGISTRATION SUBMITTED

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

19 dists past their Covid peak in state

RANJANI MADHAVAN @ Bengaluru

INDICATING that the peak of the third wave curve is behind them, 19 districts in Karnataka have shown a consistent drop in their day-wise test positivity rates (TPR) between January 19 and January 29, reveals data from the state Covid war room. Eleven remaining districts, however, have shown an increase.

The districts with the biggest fall in the 10-day period include Ramanagara, where the TPR reduced by 15.63 per cent from 27.01 per cent to 11.38 percent; Mandya by 15.53 per cent from 40.54 per cent to 25.01 per cent; Kolar by 12.51 per cent from 29.51 per cent to 17 per cent; and Bengaluru Urban by 10.20 per cent from 25.44 per cent to 15.24 per cent. (Entire list in the graphic)

On the other hand, Bagalkot saw the biggest increase in its day TPR (27.7 per cent), surging from a mere 2.3 per cent on January 19 to 30 percent 10 days later. Other districts that have shown an increase are Chamarajanagar, Haveri, Kodagu, Yadgir and Belagavi, in the descending order. Dr Pradeep Banandur, head of epidemiology department, NIMHANS who is also a member of the state Covid TAC, explained that the districts showing a consistent reduction in TPR for at least seven days indicate that they are past their peak and those that are still seeing a rise are yet to reach their peak. P3

THE 19 DISTRICTS WITH REDUCTION IN DAY-WISE TEST POSITIVITY RATE (TPR)

District	January 19	January 29	Reduced by
Ramanagara	27.01%	11.38%	15.63%
Mandya	40.54%	25.01%	15.53%
Kolar	29.51%	17.00%	12.51%
Bengaluru Urban	25.44%	15.24%	10.20%
Mysuru	33.87%	29.02%	4.85%
Tumakuru	33.04%	28.67%	4.37%
Shivamoggi	29.45%	24.36%	5.29%
Bengaluru Rural	27.03%	22.08%	4.95%
Hassan	26.58%	20.09%	6.49%
Kalaburagi	23.05%	16.98%	6.07%
Dharwad	22.86%	19.61%	3.27%
Koppal	21.77%	18.02%	3.75%
Davanagere	14.2%	12.03%	2.17%
Gadag	15.04%	11.98%	3.06%
Raichur	17.86%	11.54%	6.32%
Chikkamagaluru	14.58%	8.6%	5.98%
Vijayapura	14.32%	8.49%	5.83%
Bidar	15.34%	7.97%	7.37%
Dakshina Kannada	9.54%	6.26%	3.28%

(NOTE: Districts not in any particular order, except the first four which saw the maximum reduction)

NATIONWIDE	JAN 29	JAN 30
Fresh cases	235,532	234,281
Recoveries	335,939	352,784
Deaths	871	899

KARNATAKA	JAN 29	JAN 30
Fresh cases	33,337	28,264
Recoveries	69,902	29,244
Deaths	70	68

Pegasus set to rock Parliament session

Cong seeks privilege motion against minister; Editors Guild urges panel to take cognisance of *NYT* report

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

THE Pegasus exposé by *The New York Times* is likely to cast its shadow on the budget session of Parliament starting Monday, with the Opposition preparing to paralyse it.

Leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury set the ball rolling on Sunday by demanding a privilege motion against Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for allegedly misleading the Lok Sabha on the matter. In a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, he cited the *NYT* report that claimed India had bought the spyware in 2017. Yet, the minister claimed on the floor of the House that the Centre had nothing to do with Pegasus, he said.

"It appears that the Modi government has misled Parliament and the Supreme Court and lied to the people of India," Chowdhury alleged. In a sworn affidavit in the Supreme Court, the government had unequivocally denied all allegations against it on the Pegasus issue, he pointed out.

The Editors Guild of India, too, pitched in, urging the Justice R V Raveendran committee set up by the Supreme Court to examine the Pegasus deal, to take cognisance of the "startling claims" made by *NYT* and seek responses from the government and the ministries that may have been involved in the alleged deal in 2017. The Guild also urged the panel to keep its proceedings open to the public so that there is complete transparency on the witnesses being called and their responses.

As for the government, it sought to brush the issue aside with former Army Chief and Union minister V K Singh calling *NYT* supari media. "Can you trust *NYT*? They are known as Supari Media," he tweeted. But BJP leader Subramanian Swamy asked the Centre to rebut *NYT*, saying India's Pegasus purchase would amount to a scandal akin to Watergate.

Meanwhile, advocate M L Sharma approached the Supreme Court seeking directions to register an FIR against the Centre for probe to recover public money paid for the deal in view of the *NYT* report.

Rerun of washout?

The Pegasus row had led to a near washout of the monsoon session when a united Opposition did not allow both Houses to function and sought a discussion on the matter

EXPRESS READ

Five terrorists killed in Kashmir

Srinagar: In a major success for security forces in Jammu and Kashmir, a top self-styled commander of Jaish-e-Mohammad was among five terrorists killed in two separate overnight encounters in Pulwama and Budgam, officials said on Sunday. JeM commander Zahid Wani was active since 2017. P10

N Korea tests possibly longest-range missile

Seoul: North Korea on Sunday fired what appeared to be the most powerful missile it has tested since US President Joe Biden took office, as it revives its old playbook in brinkmanship to wrest concessions from Washington and neighbours amid a prolonged stalemate in diplomacy. P11

Defectors on Manipur BJP list spark ire

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Guwahati

SHORTLY after the ruling BJP announced its list of candidates for the Manipur elections, protestors torched the party's flags and posters, and allegedly forced the closure of its offices in some parts of the state on Sunday as their leaders were denied tickets.

The incidents were reported from some constituencies including Kakching and Sagolband. Protests were also staged in the state capital of Imphal but no violence was reported.

Apprehending trouble, the authorities had tightened security across the constituencies in Imphal. A large number of police commandos and personnel from the central paramilitary forces have been deployed at the BJP head office for about a week, while security of the party's state president A Sharda Devi, ministers and MLAs was increased.

As an immediate fallout, an aspirant at the Wangkhei seat, Thangjam Arunkumar, resigned from the party. Congress and National People's Party said a number of BJP leaders, who missed the bus, were likely to contest the two-phase polls, which starts on February 27, on their tickets.

In Delhi, after declaring the names of all 60 candidates, the BJP's Manipur election incharge Bhupender Yadav exuded confidence that the party would retain power with more than two-thirds majority. In the 2017 polls, the party had won 21 seats as against the Congress' 28 but managed to form the government. Yadav claimed that the members who had a long association with the party had been fielded, while two sitting MLAs were denied tickets. However, the list has over a dozen who had won the last election contesting from other parties and later defected to the BJP.

Rafael Nadal won his second Australian Open title in Melbourne on Sunday | AP

MARVEL @ THE POWER OF 21

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN @Chennai

THE miracle of Melbourne. Rafael's greatest work of art yet. From injury purgatory to sporting nirvana in the space of six months. From having thoughts about retirement to winning Grand Slam No 21 at a time when even his most diehard fans were not looking beyond the next day, the next match or an update on a chronic foot injury that threatened his career. A sporting story that will be told and retold for decades. Call it what you want because you are allowed to be hyperbolic about what you saw across five hours at the Rod Laver Arena on Sunday.

Two hours into the match, Rafael Nadal looked down and out at a Slam that's given him so much heartache and misery since he won it as a young tyro in 2009. The final seemed to be shaping that way when he was down 0-40, 2-3 in the third set. Having lost the first two sets, that's when the 35-year-old, 10 years older than Daniil Medvedev, upped his level. He cut out the errors and focused on keeping balls in play before constructing winning points. Even though the Russian contributed a touch to his own downfall, Nadal's nous and pressure told in the end to win 2-6, 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-4, 7-5.

In elite tennis, though, Nadal is also blessed with a trait that no other man in the modern game has. The will to fight and chase down lost causes: it's one of the great truisms of the sport. Give him a millimetre to work with and he will use weapons at his disposal to blow it open. From the middle of the third set, he changed his game a touch. He started using drop shots more effectively, a handy strategy against the Russian who started receiving treatment in his thighs fairly early. He also played the bigger points better; while the Russian had ample opportunities to break Nadal in the fourth and fifth sets (9), the former converted only two. But the Spaniard always maintained a degree of control. Whenever he was broken, he always broke back immediately.

And that's what happened deep in the fifth set. Medvedev had the chance to take a 6-5 lead when Nadal produced artistry of the highest order. Magic returns under pressure enabled him to break back. Then, he held serve to rapturous applause. P13

Top GRAND SLAM winners (men)

21 Rafael Nadal (ESP)

20 Roger Federer (SUI)

Novak Djokovic (SRB)

14 Pete Sampras (USA)

13 Nadal's first Australian Open title was in 2009 and it has taken him **13 years** for his second

What a match. To my friend and great rival Rafael Nadal heartfelt congratulations on becoming the first man to win 21 Grand Slam singles titles

Roger Federer

Traffic cop kicks woman while towing bikes

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IN a shocking incident, a traffic Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police attached to Halasuru Gate traffic police station is seen in a video assaulting a woman while towing away vehicles parked in a 'no parking' zone after she allegedly hit him with a stone.

The issue has taken a serious turn with the ASI being suspended pending inquiry and Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday announcing plans to review the towing policy because of many loopholes in it.

The incident occurred on January 24 in Halasuru Gate traffic police limits near My Sugar building. Traffic ASI Narayana R arrived with his towing team and started lifting two-wheelers parked in a 'no-parking' zone. Manjula (40), who lives in the same locality, allegedly threw a stone at Narayana who was sitting in the front seat of the towing truck, reportedly injuring him below his left eye. An infuriated Narayana got down from the towing truck and kicked Manjula, besides hurling abuses at her, as seen in the video.

Narayana then took her to the SJ Park police station and filed a complaint accusing her of voluntarily causing hurt and stopping him from discharging his duty. Based on his complaint, the SJ Park police arrested Manjula. P2

Police point to petty cases against woman

The SJ Park police, who arrested Manjula, however, said she has a few petty cases against her. In one of the complaints, it is alleged that she collected money from those who parked vehicles in the no-parking area and abused the traffic police for towing vehicles.

HDFC MUTUAL FUND
BHAROSA APNO KA
Stay relaxed and tension free
Diversifying your investments across asset classes helps to mitigate the impact of market fluctuations. In a world of uncertainties, asset allocation is critical. Thankfully, various categories of hybrid schemes - investing in a combination of asset classes, provide a convenient route to asset allocation and keep tension away!
Choose from asset allocation solutions and start your SIP today!
• Conservative Hybrid Fund
• Equity Savings Fund
• Multi Asset Allocation Fund
• Balanced Advantage Fund
• Aggressive Hybrid Fund
Contact your MFD/RIA
SIP - Systematic Investment Plan
An Investor Education Initiative by HDFC Mutual Fund
For KYC, change of address, investor complaints redressal, etc. visit, https://www.hdfcfund.com/information/key-know-how.
Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.